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Items of Interest:

May is National High Blood Pressure Education Month. Approximately 65 million persons in the United States have high blood pressure. High blood pressure increases the risk for diseases of the heart and stroke, the first and third leading causes of death in the U. S. High blood pressure or hypertension is defined as having a systolic blood pressure of 140 mm Hg or higher or a diastolic blood pressure of 90 mm Hg or higher measured on two or more occasions, or taking anti-hypertensive medication. People should have their blood pressure checked regularly. Lowering high blood pressure can reduce new events and deaths from heart diseases and stroke and can be achieved through lifestyle modifications alone or in combination with prescribed medications. To learn more about and how to treat high blood pressure, visit www.cdc.gov/cvh/announcements/bloodpressure_education_month.htm

Navy and Marine Corps Medical News

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Navy Corpsman Awarded Silver Star for Heroism in Iraq

By Bill W. Love, Naval Hospital
Corpus Christi Public Affairs

CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas - Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class (FMF) Juan M. Rubio was awarded the Silver Star Medal April 27 for conspicuous gallantry against the enemy Jan. 1, 2005, while serving as a Marine Platoon corpsman in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF).

The Silver Star Medal is the U.S. Navy's third highest award for gallantry in combat, following the Navy Cross and the nation's highest award, the Medal of Honor.

Rear Adm. Thomas R. Cullison, commander, Navy Medicine East and commander, Naval Medical Center, Portsmouth, Va., made the presentation in front of the Naval Hospital Corpus Christi personnel

and guests.

"Young corpsmen who go to Field Medical School do so in order to perform save lives duties in combat, just as Petty Officer Rubio did, and they are amazing," said Cullison.

Marine Maj. Gen. R. F. Natonski and Command Master Chief Kelvin Carter, representing the Commanding General, 1st Marine Division, hand-carried the award to Texas from Camp Pendleton, Calif., and assisted Cullison with the presentation. He also brought a personal message with him for Rubio.

"I talked to all the Marines and Sailors in Iraq before I left, and those back in Camp Pendleton, and they want me to tell you, 'good job, and outstanding job!' They are

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ATLANTIC OCEAN - Amphibious assault ship USS Iwo Jima (LHD 7) Lt. Cmdr. Darrel G. Vaughn is assisted by Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Valerie A. Sotomayor, while completing a cavity filling. U.S. Navy photo by Photographer's Mate Airman Amanda M. Williams

USNS Mercy Arrives in Hawaii

From Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet
Public Affairs

PEARL HARBOR, Hawaii - U.S. Naval hospital ship USNS Mercy (T-AH 19) arrived May 2, making its first stop during a humanitarian assistance mission to the Western Pacific and Southeast Asia.

"This is about a partnership," said Adm. Gary Roughead, commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet. "The capability that Mercy brings as a hospital ship is really unequalled. She has tremendous medical capabilities. It is our pleasure to be able to couple that medical capability and our military medical professionals with the non-governmental organizations (NGO) and with the host nations' medical capability to bring medical service, preventive medical service and just the good work people bring to one another."

This deployment to the region exemplifies the U.S. commitment to South and Southeast Asia and the Pacific island nations while building

upon relationships established during Operation Unified Assistance in 2005.

The commander of Mercy's overall mission is Capt. Bradley Martin. Capt. Joseph L. Moore is in command the ship's medical treatment facility and its medical staff. In charge of the ship and its crew is civil service mariner Capt. Robert T. Wiley, ship's master.

The ship and crew of doctors, dentists, veterinarians, nurses, and corpsmen plan to offer a number of medical, dental and veterinary services and other humanitarian assistance to men, women and children in villages normally lacking access to such treatment.

"Many Americans are from the Asia-Pacific region, and we have strong ties to family members, friends and co-workers with roots in the region," said Roughead. "It is natural we should want to be good neighbors."

Like all naval forces, Mercy can rapidly respond on short notice to a



PEARL HARBOR - The Military Sealift Command (MSC) hospital ship, USNS Mercy (T-AH 19) pulls into Pearl Harbor for a scheduled port visit. *U.S. Navy photo by Photographer's Mate 2nd Class Justin P. Nesbitt*

wide range of humanitarian missions or other crises. The deployment offers the Navy the opportunity to train the ship's crew, medical staff and nongovernmental organization partners for future operations.

"By deploying Mercy, we're not

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Germantown Sailors Provide Medical Assistance to Injured Iranian Fisherman

From U.S. 5th Fleet Public Affairs

ABOARD USS GERMANTOWN, At Sea - Sailors from USS Germantown (LSD 42) provided medical assistance to an injured Iranian fisherman May 7, in the Northern Persian Gulf.

During routine surveillance of three dhows by Germantown's Visit, Board, Search and Seizure (VBSS) team, radio contact revealed an injured crew member on one of the vessels. The dhow's master stated that the crew member injured a foot during rough seas the day before and requested medical assistance from the VBSS team.

A corpsman from Germantown was then transported to the dhow, where he diagnosed the injured man with a severe sprain and possible fracture of the left foot. The corpsman wrapped the injured foot in a splint and provided ice to re-

duce the swelling.

"This was another case where the continued presence of maritime coalition forces in the Arabian Gulf resulted in an opportunity to help out a fellow mariner in need," said Cmdr. John Deehr, USS Germantown's commanding officer. "This wasn't a shot in the dark of two ships randomly passing, but the direct product of a dedicated strategy to provide security and assistance in the area. We were happy to help and believe we make a difference in both the crew member's long-term health and the security in the region."

"It was a great opportunity for Germantown Sailors to interact firsthand with regional countries and render necessary assistance where needed," said Lt. j.g. Jeremy Fonvielle, Germantown boarding officer. "The crew invited us on board, were extremely friendly, and



PERSIAN GULF - Sailors assigned to the USS Germantown (LSD 42) prepare to board an Iranian dhow after the vessel called for assistance for an injured crew member. *U.S. Navy photo*

very appreciative of the medical assistance we rendered to their injured crewman."

Germantown is part of Combined Task Force 152 and is deployed as part of a routine rotation of U.S. maritime forces in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom, as well as conducting maritime security operations (MSO) in the region.

Occupational Health Nurse Specialists Win Prestigious Award

By Photographer's Mate Damien E. Horvath, Fleet Public Affairs Center, Pacific

CORONADO, Calif. - Nurses at the Naval Medical Center Occupational Health Unit, Naval Base Coronado, received an award in April from the nation's largest health care publication, *Advance for Nurses* magazine, in the "job knowledge" category for 2006. The unit will be recognized in the May edition of the magazine.

"The population we serve is diverse," said Karen Brabandt, Occupational Health Unit Manager. "We are entrusted with the responsibility of keeping the health and safety of not only our warfighters, but those specialists who work in industrial maintenance, engineering and repair facilities on behalf of defending our nation."

Criteria for receiving the award included maintaining certifications in various professional disciplines, attending quarterly management boards and annual conferences, and staying informed on current issues and technologies affecting the occupational health community.

"Our staff has an extensive background and lots of experience in clinical settings," said Claudia Pontier, staff nurse. "We all pull together and share our knowledge from the past."

Nurse Tanja Dressel agreed, "Anything we can do for each other to better care for our patients is going to be done. It is a special thing to work for and support the military; we're all very proud of our service members."

Unit Senior Medical Officer Lt. Cmdr. Michael Danforth has worked with the occupational health unit for three years.

"The professionalism and work ethic of the unit is unwavering," he said. "Their dedication to our civilian employees and active-duty service members is unparalleled."

Advance for Nurses magazine presents annual awards in the areas of adaptability, initiative, job knowledge and recruitment/retention. Award winners are selected out of a field of hundreds of entries.

The Occupational Health Unit is comprised of nine nurses and several doctors and occupational health specialists servicing 120 commands with more than 30,000 military and civilian personnel.

Silver Star continued...

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damned proud of you," he said. "Please continue what you have done for our great nation, the Marine Corps and Navy team, and also for the Hospital Corps community."

Rubio had already earned the Purple Heart for wounds sustained in the Jan. 1, 2005 engagement while serving with 4th Platoon, Small Craft Company, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, U.S. Marine Forces Central Command.

The citation accompanying his Silver Star Medal detailed how a well-emplaced and determined enemy ambushed Rubio and members of his team along the Euphrates River in a complex attack. As Rubio and an assault element swept through the ambush site, insurgents detonated an improvised explosive device. Rocket-propelled grenades and machine gun and small-arms fire followed immediately after the explosion, wounding three Marines.

Realizing the severity of the Marines' wounds, and bleeding profusely from his own, Rubio low-crawled across open terrain, expos-

ing himself to enemy fire to provide triage. Simultaneously taking care of three urgent surgical casualties, Rubio coached his fellow Marines who were assisting other casualties as incoming enemy fire intensified.

After stabilizing the wounded for casualty evacuation, Rubio directed the platoon to provide covering fire as he and several Marines began moving the casualties towards safety.

Without regard for his own life, he once again exposed himself to the heavy and accurate enemy fire, moving the Marines from the ambush site to the shoreline.

Rubio does not consider himself a hero, though.

"When people ask me what it is like to be looked upon as a hero, I don't see myself as such, because every son and daughter who's out there and who has family members in Iraq, they're the heroes," he acknowledged while fighting back emotion. "They're the ones who sacrifice their fathers and their mothers. That takes honor, courage and bravery to go home every night and pray that their fathers and mothers come home safe."

Since the commencement of



CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas - Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class (FMF) Juan M. Rubio was awarded the Silver Star Medal for conspicuous gallantry against the enemy while serving as a Marine platoon corpsman in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). Medical Corps, Commander, Navy Medicine East and Commander, Naval Medical Center, Portsmouth, Va., Rear Adm. Thomas R. Cullison made the presentation in front of the Naval Hospital on board Naval Air Station Corpus Christi. *U.S. Navy photo by Bill W. Love*

Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), Rubio is one of three corpsmen to receive the Silver Star.

USNS Comfort Holds Mass Casualty Exercise

By Journalist 3rd Class Heather Weaver, USNS Comfort Public Affairs

USNS COMFORT, At Sea - The crew of USNS Comfort (T-AH 20) held a mass casualty exercise in April following a simulated helicopter crash on the flight deck, demonstrating their preparedness should such a real-life event take place.

The exercise was a precursor to an international exercise involving the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom scheduled to take place in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Comfort has 19 Canadian and 14 Royal Navy personnel embarked as part of the crew.

"The drill was held to teach our international guests as well as our new staff on board the practices we currently have in place in a real-time scenario," said Lt. Cmdr. Carlos Rodriguez, division head of Surgical Services. "We were looking to stress the system we have in place and identify the shortfalls of our system in a drill scenario rather than a real-life event."

Cmdr. Patricia Corley, Comfort's Military Treatment Facility training officer, said drills such as this are important training tools to ready staff for real-life situations.

"The bottom line is we have to be ready to respond to any kind of emergency or environment we're put in," Corley said. "Our highest priority is providing the best patient

care possible, which goes hand in hand with maintaining the safety of the staff and the crew and the integrity of the ship."

The drill incorporated every member of the military treatment facility staff as well as several of Comfort's civilian mariners, either directly or indirectly. Comfort's embarked international personnel feel the ship's mission is an important one and the drills will ensure the future successes of military medicine as a whole.

"The drill went very well," said Royal Navy Lt. Elaine Thorpe, a training team member aboard the ship. "More and more in the future, we're going to be working together as a team. You never know if you'll have to come onto one of our hospital facilities or we may have to come onto one of yours. It's imperative we have an awareness of each other's processes and practices."

Moderators gave each simulated casualty a different type of injury, leaving it up to medical personnel to assess the scene. Staff had to decide which patient needed the most immediate care, how to treat that patient and move on to the next victim. Just as staff thought they had the situation under control, an abandon ship drill was called and all of the mass casualty patients had to be transported to the weather decks and loaded into lifeboats.



ATLANTIC OCEAN - Canadian Forces Cpl. Connie Scuncio, performs CPR on a mannequin during a mass casualty exercise aboard USNS Comfort (T-AH 20) as Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Mandy Gilley counts compressions. *U.S. Navy photo taken by Journalist 3rd Class Heather Weaver*

"Overall, the enthusiasm of the entire crew was excellent and I was very pleased with the outcome of the drill," Rodriguez said. "We need to work on communications between departments, but that's an easy fix."

Among its previous missions, Comfort assisted in relief efforts in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. At its height, the hospital ship had more than 700 medical and support personnel aboard to assist in the Federal Emergency Management Agency-led initiative to provide disaster relief to the Gulf region. The ship also took part in Operation Iraqi Freedom and provided services for rescue workers after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

USNS Mercy continued...

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only providing support to the host nations, we are training our medical crew in order to better prepare them to respond in times of disaster relief," he said.

"We can provide a wide range of medical care from dental, optometry, surgery, general surgery and pediatric care, just to name a few," said Capt. Joseph L. Moore, military treatment facility commander.

Working in cooperation with host nations, Mercy medical staff

will provide these medical and dental assistance programs ashore and afloat.

In addition to the Navy medical assets deploying with Mercy, the ship is also serving as an enabling platform for numerous embarked NGOs.

The relationships with non-governmental agencies developed in the relief efforts following the December 2004 tsunami were key in developing a new standard for cooperation between the U.S. military and NGOs, in order to serve a

common goal of bringing humanitarian assistance to communities in need.

After assisting with the 2004 tsunami relief effort, Mercy followed up by performing Operation Unified Assistance. During that mission, Mercy's medical team treated 107,000 patients, performed 466 surgeries, distributed 11,555 pairs of eyeglasses and performed more than 6,900 dental procedures.

Mercy's deployment is expected to last about five months.

2006 Reserve Sailor of the Year Selected

By Mass Communication Specialist
2nd Class Barrie Barber,
Commander, Navy Reserve Force
Public Affairs

WASHINGTON - The U.S. Navy Reserve selected as the 2006 Reserve Sailor of the Year Hospital Corpsman 1st Class David L. Worrell, who served under fire with the Marines in Operation Iraqi Freedom, in a ceremony held at Henderson Hall here April 27.

Chief of the Navy Reserve Force Vice Adm. John G. Cotton and a board of five force master chiefs selected Worrell, leading petty officer for 3rd Battalion, 25th Marines, Regimental Combat Team 2, 2nd Marine Division.

Assigned to Navy Operational Support Center, Akron, Ohio, Worrell was chosen from among five finalists and 43,000 enlisted Navy Reservists nationwide and in service around the world.

Worrell works as a department manager at a hospital, served seven months in combat in Al Anbar, Iraq.

He oversaw the setup of tempo-

rary medical aid stations, repeatedly participated in patrols that came under insurgent attack, helped hunt for land mines and rendered life-saving medical aid to dozens of wounded Marines.

"I am extremely humbled," he said. "I was the last one of the group of finalists that I felt was going to get this award. It could have been any one of us. You all deserve it."

He will be meritoriously promoted to chief petty officer in a ceremony in the courtyard of the Pentagon in July.

"Worrell stands as a well-spoken, energetic Sailor and combat veteran who represents the best among Reservists," said Cotton.

Navy Reserve Force Master Chief David R. Pennington, who oversaw the selection board, said the five finalists were well-rounded Sailors, each of whom received the Navy/Marine Corps Commendation Medal for their achievement.

According to Pennington, each has broadened their mind, given

from their heart, worked with their hands, and worked in tough job assignments.

"Worrell had a little of everything," Pennington said. "He is a fantastic ambassador for the Navy."

The hospital corpsman who joined the Navy Reserve three months after he left the active component said he enjoys the different opportunities the Navy Reserve has offered him.

"I absolutely love it," he said. "I wouldn't want to do anything else. I like the camaraderie and the teamwork in the Marines. It's a lot more job satisfaction."

During their visit to Washington, the Sailors and their spouses toured the White House, the Pentagon, and visited national monuments and memorials.

The Sailors also met with high-ranking military leaders, including Cotton, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs Thomas F. Hall, Medal of Honor awardee Harvey "Barney" Barnum, and Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (SS/AW) Terry Scott.

Naval Hospital Jacksonville is Hot on ICE

By Marsha Childs, Naval Hospital
Jacksonville Marketing

JACKSONVILLE—In an ongoing effort to be *First in Service*, Naval Hospital Jacksonville, Fla. is looking at ways to better assess patients' needs and satisfaction levels. One

initiative that will allow patients to evaluate the health care services they receive is the Interactive Customer Evaluation (ICE) System.

ICE is a web-based tool for collecting feedback about the services provided at the hospital or one of its branch health clinics. It allows patients to submit online comment cards to rate the health care services received during a recent visit or inpatient stay. ICE also provides patients with general information such as location, hours of operation and answers to frequently asked questions.

The ICE system generates reports, allowing the hospital's management teams to monitor customer satisfaction in their areas of responsibility. This feedback will provide timely information and en-

able staff to take corrective action as needed. Patients will also be able to view a "report card" to see how patients perceive the care they are receiving.

Naval Hospital Jacksonville Director for Health Care Operations Cmdr. Kathryn Summers feels the ICE system will give patients another venue to tell us how we are doing. She said, "ICE will allow us to receive candid input from our patients and tailor our services to meet their needs. ICE is a clear signal to our patients that customer service is a top priority for the entire staff."

ICE will be available on the hospital's website starting June 1 at www.navalhospitaljax.com.



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